



A guide to asbestos

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a term for a group of minerals made of microscopic fibres that are harmful to people if the asbestos is disturbed. Before the dangers of asbestos were recognised, it was a common building material in the UK, used in insulation, flooring and roofing. Though it is now banned in the UK, many properties built before the year 2000 may contain asbestos.

Asbestos can be found in many areas of construction including cement, textured coatings, floor tiles, textiles, sprayed coatings on walls, beams and columns, lagging, and ceiling or floor cavities. Material containing asbestos isn't likely to pose a health risk as long as it's not damaged or disturbed.

How could Asbestos be a problem?

Due to its worldwide use and the mining operations to extract it, we are all exposed to very low levels of asbestos in the air we breath every day, however it is unlikely to harm people's health. It is also unlikely that levels of asbestos found in our buildings will be harmful, but if you have damaged, suspected asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice from the Property Services Department where you will be given guidance on the best course of action to take.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

It is not always easy to spot materials that could contain asbestos on their appearance alone, especially if they have been decorated in some way. Experienced surveyors and Health & Safety specialists are best able to locate and identify them. Examples of locations may include:

- Textured coating e.g. Artex type coatings (prior to 1990)
- Fire stop panels (inside heater cupboards, drying cupboards and around boilers)
- Floor tiles and the adhesive bonding the tiles to floors
- Electrical mains distribution cupboards (fuse box)
- Eaves/soffits
- Rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes, soil pipes)
- Flue pipes and terminals
- Hip, ridge and roof tiles
- Corrugated cement sheeting—usually found on outbuildings and garage roofs

What if I want to decorate or make alterations?

Some older forms of decorative textured coatings e.g. Artex are known to contain small amounts of asbestos. Please seek advice prior to these surfaces being disturbed. **DO NOT** attempt to remove these types of coatings without speaking to us.

You must not carry out structural alterations or improvements to your home unless Keniston Housing Association has given you permission. Please seek guidance and approval from us before carrying out work.

If you are concerned about any suspect material in your home, do consider that it may contain asbestos until proven otherwise.



Advice and guidance

Keniston Housing Association seeks to maintain your property to a high standard and any materials containing asbestos are most likely to be in good condition and are unlikely to pose any significant risk to your health.

You could be potentially at risk when carrying out DIY or minor building repairs. If you are at all concerned please contact the Property Services Department.



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What if material containing asbestos is damaged?

Do not

- attempt to repair any damage or clean up any debris yourself.
- sweep up or use a domestic vacuum cleaner, as this could lift asbestos fibres into the air

Do not worry

Contact the Property Services Department and explain the problem.

Remember - Asbestos materials which are in good condition and undamaged are not dangerous.